



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Pathfinders of San Diego to Celebrate One-Year Anniversary of the Opening of North Park Shelter Plus Care Permanent Supportive Housing Facility**

*Calls for police services at this once blighted site decline from 108 the year before construction started to just four since the project opened; local government is anticipated to save \$27 million over the life of the project due to reduction in the costs to care for the chronically homeless*

**SAN DIEGO, CA** — Steve Noriega, an Army veteran that been has fighting drug and alcohol abuse for 35 years, is happy to talk about the changes in his life. “I now have a place to come home to, a roof over my head and a bed to sleep in. It means the world to me.”

Now, thanks to matching \$2 million loans from the City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency and San Diego Housing Commission, people like Steve have a chance to turn their lives around due to the opening of the Shelter Plus Care Facility on University Avenue in North Park. The funds allowed for renovations to transform a deteriorating, crime-ridden, motel into 17 residential apartments for homeless men dual diagnosed with substance abuse and mental illness. “This development was a catalytic project for the community and for the individuals that benefit from the program,” said Janice Weinrick, Deputy Executive Director of the San Diego Redevelopment Agency. “By using redevelopment dollars to create a positive impact on a neighborhood, it opens up opportunities for private investors to follow.”

In November, Pathfinders of San Diego celebrates the one year anniversary of opening the facility. The positive changes in the community have been overwhelming. The Police Department received 108 calls about drugs, prostitution and other criminal activity in the year prior to the start of construction and only four calls since the facility has been opened. “The rehabilitation of the site has turned the area from a vice den to a place of recovery. You can’t get any more of a turn around,” according to San Diego police officer, David Surwilo, a community relations officer for North Park.



The long terms benefits of the project are even more dramatic. A 2009 Los Angeles Public Costs Study, *Where We Sleep*, estimated the annualized cost of services for chronically homeless as \$34,764 before housing and \$7,260 with housing, a savings of \$27,504. Assuming a 10 percent vacancy rate, the Shelter Plus Care facility is anticipated to save local government approximately \$27 million over the 55-year life of the project, a 675 percent return on the initial investment of public funds.

Pathfinders' goal is to help each resident return to society as a productive, self-supporting individual. It has had a number of success stories of people who have graduated and gone on to obtain jobs and move back into their own place, spurring economic benefits that even far outweigh the local budgetary savings. As one resident graduates another moves in, continuing the process of recovery. "I think Pathfinders has the highest rate of sobriety of any recovery program," said Stan Stanley, Executive Director. "Our social model program allows men to be men all the while following the golden rule."

#### **About the City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency**

The City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency created by the City Council in 1958, uses special legal and financial mechanisms to eliminate blight and improve economic and physical conditions in designated areas of the City. The Agency's purview encompasses 17 project areas, study areas and affordable housing. Activities within the project areas are carried out by the City's Redevelopment Department and two public, nonprofit city corporations: Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC) and Southeastern Economic Development Corporation (SEDC). The Agency also administers eight Project Area Committees (PAC) that advise the agency on the adoption of redevelopment plans and implementing redevelopment projects.

For more information about housing loans and assistance, contact:

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